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Letter dated 30 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United Kingdom in May 2008 (see annex). The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**

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Annex to the letter dated 30 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (May 2008)

Introduction

Under the presidency of the United Kingdom in May 2008, the Security Council held 16 meetings, including 4 open debates, 1 private debate, and 6 briefings. In addition, the Council held consultations of the whole on 11 occasions. The Council adopted one resolution and six presidential statements.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, David Miliband MP, presided over the open thematic debate that the Council convened on 20 May.

Africa

Burundi

On 22 May, the Permanent Representative of Norway and Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration, Ambassador Johan Løvald and the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Ambassador Augustin Nsanze briefed the Security Council on the situation in Burundi. Ambassador Løvald highlighted the key challenges that emerged from the recent visit of the Commission to the country: security, parliamentary impasse, 2010 elections, land and the economic situation. He called on the Council to follow the situation closely, given the fragility of the situation, and for the Secretary-General to consider using the full weight of his good offices. He was particularly concerned about the elections to be held in 2010 and the potential for greater instability. Ambassador Nsanze considered that the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2008/330) had been prepared at a time of pessimism, but there was new confidence with the return of Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération (FNL). He also raised the issue of blockages within the National Assembly, the Constitution, transitional justice and donor commitments.

The Council then retired to consultations of the whole, where the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Youssef Mahmoud, provided a briefing, drawing on the Secretary-General's third report on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (S/2008/330). Council members agreed on a statement to the press, which members of the Council reiterated their concern at the recent confrontations between Palipehutu-FNL and the national defence forces of Burundi, stressed the need for a cessation of hostilities and urged the parties to implement fully the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement. They called on the entire leadership of Palipehutu-FNL to return to Bujumbura, urged parties to seize the opportunity to consolidate peace definitively and expressed their support for the Political Directorate, the South African Facilitation and the regional initiative. Council

members emphasized their concern at the paralysis of the National Assembly and called on all political parties to find an early solution. They also urged the Government to protect all Burundians.

Sierra Leone

On 7 May, the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Dmitry Titov, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Sierra Leone, the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone and the mandate for the proposed successor office, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Permanent Representative of the Netherlands and Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission's Sierra Leone configuration, Ambassador Frank Majoor, also briefed the Council on the Commission's role and findings. The Council then retired to consultations of the whole. Council members expressed broad support for the proposals relating to the new office and the work of the Government of Sierra Leone with the Peacebuilding Commission. Council members also stressed the importance of successful local elections on 5 July. Members raised concerns about the vacant post of Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, rising rice and fuel prices, reports of political tension and continuing large-scale youth unemployment.

Somalia

On 14 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Somalia during consultations of the whole. The Under-Secretary-General set out the latest security, political and humanitarian developments, saying there had been an escalating wave of violence in recent weeks, and that piracy also continued to be a concern. He informed the Council that 2.6 million Somali people needed humanitarian assistance. Food price rises were having an impact on urban food security. There were also 750,000 internally displaced persons, 82 per cent of whom were concentrated in the most vulnerable regions. In March 2008, 23,000 tons of food had reached 1.2 million people. The Under-Secretary-General called for a focus on building national capacity to deliver assistance and protection. On the political front, he said that leaders of the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia had committed themselves to peace, and dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government was under way in Djibouti. Council members expressed concern at the worsening humanitarian and security situation, but expressed hope for progress in the talks between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance.

On 15 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1814 (2008), by which it stepped up the United Nations engagement on Somalia. Among other elements in the resolution, the Council approved the creation of a joint United Nations planning unit, to facilitate an integrated United Nations approach under the coordination of the Secretary-General's Special Representative. The Council supported the relocation of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia from Nairobi to Somalia, subject to security provisions, and decided that the United Nations would enhance its support to the political process being undertaken by the Somali authorities. The Council called for States to protect the delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia, and further called for the Secretary-General to strengthen efforts to facilitate consultations regarding humanitarian access and

security issues. The Council urged States to support, with funding and personnel, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and expressed its willingness to consider a United Nations peacekeeping operation, subject to political and security conditions. The Council requested a report from the Secretary-General in 60 days.

Sudan/African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

On 13 May, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/15) condemning the attacks of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Khartoum on 13 May.

On 14 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), on the basis of the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/304). The Under-Secretary-General warned the Council that the security situation in Darfur was deteriorating at an alarming rate. The attacks by JEM on Khartoum had followed a wider escalation of violence, including aerial bombing of villages by the Government of the Sudan. There had been 150,000 new internally displaced persons so far in 2008. The humanitarian climate was also worsening, and camps for internally displaced persons were overstretched. Malnutrition indices had reached worrying levels. The Under-Secretary-General said the United Nations had drawn up an "enhanced plan" that had a target of 80 per cent of UNAMID deployment by the end of 2008. Whether this could be achieved would depend on a number of critical factors such as troop contributors being ready, UNAMID receiving additional engineering and transport capabilities, and bureaucratic impediments being lifted, including Customs clearances.

Meeting afterwards in consultations of the whole, Council members welcomed the United Nations plan to expedite UNAMID deployment. They also condemned the recent JEM attack; called for a cessation of hostilities and a renewed effort on the political process, including the appointment of a Chief Mediator; and expressed concern over renewed tensions between the Sudan and Chad. Some delegations called for sanctions to be imposed against the JEM rebel group. Others also underlined the need for the Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Eritrea/Ethiopia

On 14 May, during consultations of the whole, the Permanent Representative of Belgium, Ambassador Johan Verbeke presented a non-paper on possible scenarios for further Security Council engagement on the Eritrea/Ethiopia situation. Ambassador Verbeke said new decisions by the Council would be welcomed since the work of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea had practically concluded, owing primarily to restrictions imposed by Eritrea on the Mission. Council members discussed the scenarios set out in the non-paper. Many Council members called for continuing dialogue with the parties, including on the scenarios.

Asia

The Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 28 May, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and Secretary-General's Envoy to the Quartet, Robert Serry, briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. During subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members expressed strong support for talks aimed at achieving agreement on the establishment of a Palestinian State by the end of 2008, with many delegations stressing the need for practical progress on the ground to that end. They also welcomed productive engagement by the international community, including the meetings in London on 2 May of the Quartet Principals and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, and the role played by regional actors, in particular the League of Arab States and the Governments of Egypt and Qatar. Council members expressed continuing concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. On Lebanon, there was strong support in the Security Council for the Doha agreement.

Myanmar

On 2 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement on Myanmar (S/PRST/2008/13), in which it reaffirmed its statements of 11 October and 15 November 2007 and its support for the Secretary-General's mission of good offices and the work of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari. In the presidential statement, the Council noted the upcoming referendum and the elections scheduled for 2010. It noted the commitment by the Government of Myanmar to ensure that the referendum process would be free and fair and underlined the need for the Government of Myanmar to establish the conditions for, and create an atmosphere conducive to, an inclusive and credible process. The Council recognized the important role of ASEAN and affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Myanmar.

Lebanon (resolution 1559 (2004))

On 8 May, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), Terje Røed-Larsen, briefed the Council on the basis of the Secretary-General's seventh semi-annual report (S/2008/264). In subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members expressed deep concern at clashes and unrest in Lebanon, and urged all sides to exercise calm and restraint. They stressed the vital importance of all sides working together to resolve Lebanon's problems through peaceful dialogue. Finally, they recalled that Lebanon's long-term stability primarily relied on the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) and all other relevant resolutions on Lebanon.

On 22 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement concerning the situation in Lebanon (S/PRST/2008/17), in which it strongly supported the agreement reached in Doha on 21 May and called for the implementation of that agreement in its entirety, in accordance with the Arab League initiative and in conformity with the Taif Agreement and all relevant Security Council resolutions and statements of its President on the situation in Lebanon.

Nepal/United Nations Mission in Nepal

On 22 May, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Nepal, Ian Martin, briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2008/313). In the consultations of the whole that followed, Council members expressed appreciation for the work of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and welcomed the successful conclusion of the elections. There was broad agreement with the assessment of the Special Representative that the challenges ahead were significant, including the early formation of the new government; drafting the constitution; discussions on federalism; the future of the two armies (Nepalese Army; Maoists); arrangements on arms monitoring; and tackling impunity. Council members noted that it was for the Government of Nepal to determine what assistance was required. In response to a question from Council members, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General responded that the Government of Nepal could request a technical rollover of the UNMIN mandate given that negotiations on forming a government were unlikely to meet the deadline of 28 May set in the interim constitution.

Timor-Leste

On 29 May, the Council considered the Secretary-General's report on the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing (S/2008/329). This discussion followed an oral briefing by the Police Adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Andrew Hughes, on 23 April. He had used that opportunity to hear comments and questions from the Security Council. Council members expressed support for the Secretary-General's recommendations, including the need for the long-term engagement of the United Nations and the Security Council.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 19 May, the High Representative and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Miroslav Lajčak, briefed the Security Council on his six-monthly report to the Secretary-General (S/2008/300). Council members expressed their appreciation for the work of the Office of the High Representative and recognition of the progress made in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards European Union integration. Bosnia and Herzegovina was expected to sign a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union on 16 June. The Peace Implementation Council had decided that the Office of the High Representative would remain open until such time as Bosnia and Herzegovina met five objectives and two conditions, one of which was signature of the stabilization and association agreement. The Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, Nikola Špirić, made a statement to the Council, which also heard from the European Union presidency and Serbia.

Georgia

On 30 May, the Council held a closed meeting on Georgia at the request of the Georgian Mission. Georgia and Germany, as coordinator of the Friends of the Secretary-General, attended the meeting. Discussion focused on the report of UNOMIG on the incident of 20 April involving the downing of a Georgian

unmanned aerial vehicle over the zone of conflict. Council members expressed their serious concern about the current situation.

Thematic issues

Briefing by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies

On 6 May, the Council heard briefings from three Chairmen of subsidiary bodies of the Council, updating the Council on their work since the last such briefing to the Council on 14 November 2007. Ambassador Neven Jurica of Croatia briefed the Council in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, Ambassador Johan Verbeke of Belgium briefed the Council in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, and Ambassador Jorge Urbina of Costa Rica briefed the Council in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

Ambassador Jurica also made a statement on behalf of all three Committee Chairmen, briefing the Council on ongoing cooperation among the three Committees and their bodies of experts. He presented a comparative table which the Committees had developed to highlight the mandates of the three Committees and their experts.

As Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Ambassador Jurica drew attention to the adoption of resolution 1805 (2008) by which the Council had extended the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. He stressed the importance of facilitating technical assistance, and reported on the Committee's ongoing consideration of a report on global implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

Ambassador Verbeke stressed the importance of Member States supporting the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) with information to keep the Committee's consolidated list up to date, and briefed the Council on changes the Committee had made to improve its procedures.

Ambassador Urbina briefed the Council on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in the past six months, including outreach and work with international, regional and subregional organizations. He drew attention to the adoption of resolution 1810 (2008), by which the Council had extended the mandate of the Committee for a further three years.

All Council members, and nine non-members, spoke. Member States highlighted the importance of further work on outreach, dialogue and assistance. They encouraged further the ongoing cooperation among the Committees and their role in the cross-United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

On 20 May, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, David Miliband, chaired an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding. The Secretary-General, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, Zainab Hawa Bangura, the Senior Vice President of the World Bank,

Marwan Muasher, and Lakdhar Brahimi briefed the Council. In advance of the meeting, the United Kingdom had circulated a concept paper (S/2008/291), focusing on leadership, civilian capacity and funding gaps.

The Secretary-General stressed three priorities for responding effectively in the immediate aftermath of conflict: establishing viable political processes to buttress peace agreements, restoring security and the rule of law, and delivering immediate and tangible benefits to people. In order to strengthen the international response, three issues needed to be addressed. First, coherence and coordination, with clear leadership and with each partner bringing its distinct advantage to the broader effort. Secondly, increased capacity so that coordination could happen, especially for the Secretary-General's Special Representatives. Thirdly, increased availability of civilian capabilities was needed, in particular police and rule of law expertise. Member States and regional partners were exploring ways of building capacity, for which there was a need to pool efforts. All of these required early and flexible funding; a start-up fund should be explored.

The Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone briefed the Council on her country's national experience. The civilian component of peace operations was as essential as the military one. Better funding and improved integration were crucial for post-conflict stabilization and national recovery, as was rapid action by the international community in response to crises. Coordination among international actors was essential to nurture local capacities. The United Nations had a central role in this.

The Vice-President of the World Bank said that the challenge of countries coming out of conflict or seeking to avoid the breakdown of the State had been chosen as one of six strategic themes by the World Bank. Coordination was first about clarity of vision and secondly about institutional arrangements. Supporting a country's institutions was the best way to secure national ownership and render reconstruction sustainable. Humanitarian and development funds should be more fungible in order to ensure a swift response to changing needs.

Lakdhar Brahimi said that rapid, flexible funding was critical. In the case of civilian capacities, the focus should be on a light United Nations footprint. The United Nations should not assume that each country had little or no capacity of its own: these could be found, including in the diaspora. He supported the idea of Member States developing civilian cadres.

Following the briefings, there were statements from 50 States, both members and non-members of the Council. Member States stressed the need for national ownership, and for the international community to focus its efforts on building local capacity. Many Member States also recalled that the 2005 World Summit had recognized those gaps, which had resulted in the creation of the new peacebuilding architecture. They felt that the Peacebuilding Commission should be closely engaged in further work.

At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/16), in which it recognized that supporting States recovering from conflict and building sustainable peace was a major challenge, and that an effective response needed to be integrated and coherent. The Council emphasized the importance of national ownership and welcomed the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council recognized that civilian expertise was essential in helping to meet urgent needs, and encouraged efforts to make such expertise rapidly

available. The Council highlighted the need for the United Nations to play a leading role in coordinating international efforts, and stressed the need for finance to be available from the outset. The Council reaffirmed the role of regional organizations in helping countries recover from conflict.

The Council invited the Secretary-General to provide advice within 12 months to the relevant United Nations organs on how best to take forward these issues within the United Nations system and, taking into consideration the views of the Peacebuilding Commission, how to coordinate peacebuilding activities and encourage the mobilization and most effective use of resources for urgent peacebuilding needs.

Protection of Civilians in armed conflict

On 27 May, the Council held an open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, briefed the Council on the current situation. He said that while there had been positive developments in some areas, countless civilians continued to suffer from the effects of conflict. He highlighted the conduct of hostilities, sexual and gender-based violence, and humanitarian access as the three most acute protection challenges. He reiterated that a more consistent approach to integrating the protection of civilians into all aspects of the Council's work would make a difference to the lives of millions trapped in the horror of war. The Under-Secretary-General also mentioned his recent visit to Myanmar, noting that although Cyclone Nargis was outside the scope of the debate, it was clear that humanitarian access was an issue in natural disasters as well as conflicts.

Council members and 26 non-members spoke. Most agreed that the facilitation of humanitarian access was crucial, highlighted the importance of accountability and ending impunity, and underlined the importance of international humanitarian law. The Council adopted a presidential statement at the end of the debate (S/PRST/2008/18), in which it reiterated the Council's commitment to addressing the impact of armed conflict on civilians, underlined the importance of safe and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel, recognized the increasingly valuable role of regional organizations, and requested the Secretary-General to submit his next report on the protection of civilians by May 2009.

Security sector reform

On 12 May, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on his report, entitled "Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" (S/2008/39). The Secretary-General noted that the United Nations had assisted national authorities in security sector reform since 1989. His current report was a means to address gaps in the overall framework and structure of the United Nations approach. The Secretary-General outlined key principles that should guide the United Nations approach to security sector reform: it should be at the request of national Governments; its cornerstone should be national ownership; it should be based on working in collaboration with key international partners; it must be flexible and tailored to the individual country; and it must be gender-sensitive and consistent with international law. He concluded by identifying a minimum set of measures to enhance the United Nations performance.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Ján Kubiš, and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Susan van der Merwe, briefed the Council, focusing in particular on their joint initiative in holding an international workshop on enhancing United Nations support for security sector reform in Africa on 7 and 8 November 2007 (see S/2007/687). The Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Yukio Takasu also briefed the Council on the Peacebuilding Commission's consideration of security sector reform for the countries on its agenda.

The Council then retired to informal consultations of the whole, after which a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/14) was adopted, in which Council members welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts on security sector reform and took note of his report. The Council commended the joint initiative of the Governments of Slovakia and South Africa in holding a workshop in 2007, encouraged further similar initiatives, and emphasized the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council recognized that it was the sovereign right and primary responsibility of the country concerned to determine its national approach and priorities for security sector reform, and that there was a need to develop a holistic and coherent United Nations approach to security sector reform in close consultation with Member States. The Council recognized the important role that the United Nations has played in supporting national security sector reform efforts and underlined the need for its continued engagement.

Other issues

International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda

On 14 May, the Security Council received a briefing from the Permanent Representative of Belgium in his capacity as Chairman of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals. Ambassador Verbeke briefed the Council on progress in discussing the "residual issues" of the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, namely the functions of the two Tribunals that will continue after the completion of their mandates.